

A Description of Sebuano-English Cyberlogues

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Sebuano-English cyberlogues in cybersocieties, a code mixing phenomenon in Facebook and Youtube. Code mixing is an unconscious, extensive and regular transfer of linguistic units from one language or more to another, below the level of a sentence by a large population of bilingual and monolingual speakers. More particularly, this paper describes the patterns of code mixing, as well as the morphophonemic and morphosyntactic processes involved in the mixing process as reflected in the cyberlogues in the selected cybersocieties. Findings of this study will fill a research gap related to code mixing in written text and will partially indicate the Sebuano's current lexicon. The data were gathered through documentation of cyberlogues in three Cebuano Facebook groups and one Youtube channel. The data were examined through the Relative Congruence Methodology adapted by the researcher from Rasul's (2006) Context of Situation and other existing approaches in code mixing to provide an analysis of the patterns of code mixing from word to clausal levels and to describe the orthographical, morphological and syntactic processes involved in the mixing process. The results show that code mixing is manifested by insertion, nativization and miscellaneous attachments of the cooperating language to the accommodating language.

KEYWORDS: *Language Development, Language Contact, Code Mixing, Linguistic Hybridity*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines, being a highly multilingual country (Lorente, 2000), has a number of studies concerning language development, variation and change. Some of these studies are on code switching and code mixing. Despite the ambiguity which lies on the tendency of using these terms interchangeably in most sociolinguistic research (Bautista, 1997 & Rasul, 2006), they remain to be significantly essential for further exploration of language contact phenomena.

In fact, code mixing, over time, has slowly established a crucial role in the instances of linguistic convergence independent from code switching. According to McArthur (1998), aside from the generally accepted idea that these two language phenomena both suggest a movement or transition from using linguistic units (words, phrases, clauses, etc.) of one language to using those of another within a single sentence, code mixing could lead to hybridization more than code switching can. Such is the case of the common Sebuano and English mixing in cybersocieties today, frequent and consistent transfer of linguistic units from either which of the language to each other has become very evident today, be it in speech text, written or in cyberlogues, by which "a hybrid code" is most likely to take birth out from the extensive exposure of Cebuanos in this language contact today (Rubrico 1998 and Polito 2009.)

The present study aims to describe the code-mixed variety of Sebuano and English in present day cyberlogues. Cyberlogues refer to all discourse units in all weblogs, particularly, social networking sites, such as posts, message threads and comments. Characteristically, cyberlogues approximate actual speech production exhibiting an

inherently natural and conversational flow. Compared to written text, cyberlogues are less constrained; they reflect how a speaker actually uses a language orally.

II. Literature Review

2.1. Sebuano and its contact with English

In the Philippines, Sebuano ranks second to Filipino in terms of most spoken languages in the Philippines. It has the following alternative names: Sugbuhanon, Sugbuanon, Visayan, Bisayan, Bisaya, and Sebuano. Sebuano is not only used in the island [Cebu], but also by most of the central and southern Philippines. It is derived from the Philippine Island of Cebu, with the Spanish suffix *ano* which means "native of the place" added at the end. On the other hand, Babor's view of Sebuano's contact to English displays an assertion that these two languages can hardly adapt each other's grammatical features, that is when put together as a single linguistic mode. Furthermore, he added that it is rather Filipino's grammar that is more apt to this, being more closely knitted to English, as evidenced in Filipino terms today that are mere extracts from English.

2.2. Code Mixing and Code Switching

A study conducted by Polito (2009) entitled "Revisiting Seblish: A Congruence to Sebuano-English Code Switching" discusses the mixing process of Sebuano grammar to that in English. He made use of Sebba's (1998) Congruence approach which exhibited the possible motivations of the shifting points of the two languages. However, the data was only limited to a dialect of Sebuano and does not represent the commonality of Sebuano dialects having been exposed to code switching with English. There is no further description of the linguistic convergence of Sebuano and English in

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terms of its phonological and morpho-syntactical aspects, which this paper aims to do. Also, his study has indeed been a good precursor to a paper such as the present study which would test the theory of Lorente (2000) which proposes that this code switching activity of the two languages and its awkwardness in some of its shifting points are somehow

caused by the newly born hybrid code called "Seblish". This paper will prove that the negotiation of grammatical structures of two languages has just become a naturally occurring circumstance more than an option in modes of communication.

III. Methods

3.1. Corpus

The table below shows the sources of the data used in this study, including the number of cyberlogues comprising the research corpora and the population sizes of the cybersocieties from where the data was drawn.

Table 1 Number of cyberlogues collected from selected cybersocieties

Cyber society	Groups/Channel	Cyberlogues (November 25-January 16, 2012)	Members /Commenters (As of November 20,2011)
FACEBOOK	"Taga Clarin ka kung", Mis.Occ.	198	1,126
	"Taga CDO ka kung", Mis. Or.	102	2,457
	"Taga Iligan ka kung", Lanao del Norte	406	4,459
YOUTUBE	Boholdibo Channel (4 Music Videos)	498	498
Total		1024	8540

The data that was used in this study are Sebuano-English cyberlogues (i.e. codemixed message posts and comments that the researcher collected from Facebook and Youtube.)

3.2. Sampling Design

Judgement sampling is used in this study, such that, in Facebook, only those cyberlogues appearing from November 25 to January 16, 2012 at a specific time frame of every 3 pm to 9 pm every day, are taken as data for this study.

3.3. Research Design

The research is descriptive-qualitative in nature since it aimed to present specific patterns of code mixing and grammatical notions in the Sebuano-English convergence.

3.4. Data Collection

In obtaining the data needed for the study, the researcher applied the Documentary research design. The researcher browsed cybersocieties on Facebook where majority of the participants or members are native-Sebuano speakers or at least a Sebuano speaker. Cyberlogues from these cybersocieties have been copied and pasted from the webpage to MS-Word documents.

IV. Findings

The following are findings of the study:

1. The types of patterns of code mixing are through morpheme, inter-unit and clausal insertions, word and phrasal nativization and miscellaneous attachments of CL to AL.
2. The linguistic items of English that are mixed with Sebuano in Seblish cyberlogues are nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, phrases, clauses, acronyms, endearments, modes and terms of addresses, tags and fillers, blessings, greetings and interjections.
3. The most inserted and nativized lexical categories are nouns, followed by verbs, adjectives, pronouns adverbs and the rest of the English linguistic items under miscellaneous attachments' section.
4. The orthographical description in Sebuano-English cyberlogues describes and reflects the extent of the code mixing of the two languages (i.e. Sebuano and English), through morphophonemic processes namely

assimilation, deletion, grapho-phoneme correspondence and epenthesis. The morphological analysis also in this study supports the code mixing frequency of Sebuano-English cyberlogues heavily through affixations and little by reduplication.

5. Syntactical analysis reveals the stable dependency of Sebuano-English cyberlogues on the syntax of both languages involved. However, there are some syntactic formations which are unique from both English and Sebuano's syntactic structure. Yet they only appear once except the pattern, C + S + IC, where C as a complement in the sentence is a phrase composed of an article *the* and an adjective *best*, functioning as one lexical item i.e. as an adjective. This is because of the fact that the development of this language contact is still on-going and its possible completion might certainly establish as well its unique sentence patterns.
6. Mixing is most permissible through affixation and nativization. Function words are in so far not permissible to reflect the code mixing process of Sebuano and English because of the dual syntactic structure that Sebuano-English cyberlogues still follow i.e. that of English and Sebuano. Rarely enough do unique syntactic rules are formed such as C + S + IC, where C is composed of an article and an adjective. Sebuano affixation does not happen in adverbs and the rest of other word categories except for nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

V. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, code mixing is not exclusively by bilingual cybersoc participants alone. The presence of miscellaneous attachments and once-appearing words of the CL in the AL sentences proved that monolingual cybersoc participants, who may not be proficient in the CL, could also participate in the code mixing activity in cyberlogues. This has therefore exhibited the extent of Sebuano-English convergence in cyberlogues both by monolingual and bilingual cybersoc participants. This is

manifested by how the two linguistic structures achieved relative congruence in the mixing process. This is because “congruence” only takes place in some lexical categories which mostly belong to content words, such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. However, these manifestations of language change is still an on-going process that if further develops will give birth to a hybrid code of Sebuano and English, which means having its own specific and particular rules, principles, grammar, quirks, oddities and eccentricities unique from that of Sebuano and English.

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